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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/553,207	10/13/2005	Shinichi Azumi	4492-0136PUS1	1238
2292 7590 03/22/2007 BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH PO BOX 747 FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747			EXAMINER LABOMBARD, RUTH NAOMI	
			ART UNIT 2852	PAPER NUMBER

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	03/22/2007	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Notice of this Office communication was sent electronically on the above-indicated "Notification Date" and has a shortened statutory period for reply of 3 MONTHS from 03/22/2007.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

mailroom@bskb.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/553,207

Applicant(s)

AZUMI ET AL.

Examiner

Ruth N. LaBombard

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 January 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 8 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a). Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Objections

1. The objections to the specification in the Office action mailed on 10/2/06 have been withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
3. Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bosy (US 6,394,300 B1).
4. With respect to claim 1 Bosy discloses a lock mechanism for an opening and closing member (22), comprising: an opening and closing member (22) that is provided on an apparatus frame (12) and that can be opened and closed; and at least two lock member sets (24, 26 and 28, 42) for sustaining a state in which the opening and closing member (22) is closed with respect to the apparatus frame (12), wherein each of the at least two lock member sets (24, 26 and 28, 42) is constituted by a secured member (24, 28) that is provided on the opening and closing member (22), and a bearing member (26, 42) that is provided on the apparatus frame (12) and that is to elastically secure the secured member (24, 28), and wherein an elastic force when the secured member (24, 28) in any one lock member set (28, 42) of the at least two lock member sets (24, 26 and 28, 42) is secured to the bearing member (26, 42) is set to be greater than that of the other lock member set (24, 26), and the secured member (24, 28), in the any one lock member set (28, 42), secured to the bearing member (26, 42) with the greater

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elastic force is disposed at a substantially center position (see figure 3) in a direction perpendicular to an opening and closing direction of the opening and closing member (22).

5. With respect to claim 2 Bosy discloses wherein the secured members (24, 28) in the lock member sets (24, 26 and 28, 42) are provided on an opening and closing end side of the opening and closing member (22). See figure 3.

6. With respect to claim 3 Bosy discloses the secured member (28) in the any one lock member set (28, 42) is disposed at a substantially center position in a direction perpendicular to an opening and closing direction of the opening and closing member (22). See figure 3.

7. With respect to claim 4 Bosy discloses the at least two lock member sets (24, 26 and 28, 42) are three lock member sets. The lock member sets of Bosy comprise two sets of the 24, 26 set and one set of the 28, 42 set.

8. With respect to claim 5 Bosy discloses a relative space between a front end of the secured member (24, 28) and the bearing member (26, 42) in the any one lock member set is set to be smaller than relative spaces between a front end of the secured member (24, 28) and the bearing member (26, 42) in the other lock member set, and wherein the any one secured member (24, 28) is secured to the bearing member (26, 42) first when closing the opening and closing member (22).

9. With respect to claim 6 Bosy discloses the secured members (24, 28) are formed in one piece with the opening and closing member (22) by integrally molding.

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10. With respect to claim 7 Bosy discloses the bearing members (26, 42) are formed in one piece with the apparatus frame (12) by integrally molding.

Allowable Subject Matter

11. Claim 8 is allowed.

12. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art does not disclose or suggest the claimed "image forming apparatus" in combination with the remaining claim limitations as set forth in claim 8.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Response to Arguments

13. Applicant's arguments, see pages 10-13, filed 1/3/07, with respect to the rejection(s) of claim(s) 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103 have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of Bosy. Applicants disclose, on page 12, lines 11-13, "elastic force can be increased by increasing the thickness or width of the support arms." Bosy discloses two support arms with a small width and a third, centrally located, support arm having a substantially larger width and thickness. The third support arm, disclosed by Bosy, clearly has a greater elastic force, as defined by the applicants.

Conclusion

14. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Contact Information

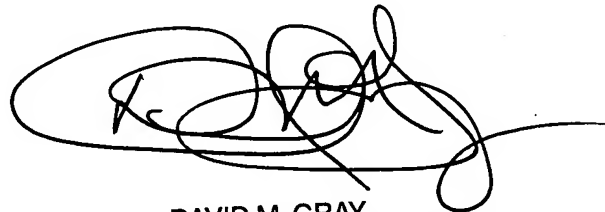
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ruth N. LaBombard whose telephone number is (571) 272-6430. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 7:30am - 4:00pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Gray can be reached on (571) 272-2119. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

RNL
3/12/07

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. M. Gray', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

DAVID M. GRAY
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER